United Nations E/CN.3/2000/19

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
3 December 1999

Original: English

Statistical Commission
Thirty-first session
29 February-3 March 2000
Item 11* of the provisional agenda**
Coordination and integration of international statistical programmes

Report of the Administrative Committee on Coordination Subcommittee on Statistical Activities on its thirty-third session

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the Statistical Commission the report of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) Subcommittee on Statistical Activities on its thirty-third session (Madrid, 14-16 September 1999). The report is transmitted to the Commission as requested at its thirtieth session.[1]

Notes

[1] See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1999, Supplement No. 4* (E/1999/24), chap. I, sect. B.

* The report is also relevant to the discussion under items 3-5, 7 and 9 of the provisional agenda.
** E/CN.3/2000/1.

00-22608 (E) 260100

Report of the ACC Subcommittee on Statistical Activities on its thirty-third session

(Madrid, 14-16 September 1999)

Contents

		Paragraphs	*Page*
I.	Introduction	1	3
II.	Matters for endorsement or approval of the Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions	2	3
III.	Work of the Subcommittee on Statistical Activities	3–30	4
A.	Adoption of the report of the Subcommittee on its thirty-second session	3	4
B.	Matters arising from the thirty-second session of the Subcommittee	4–5	4
C.	Issues related to the work of the task forces and intersecretariat working groups	6–12	5
D.	Environment statistics	13	5
E.	Tourism satellite account	14	6
F.	Classification of statistics and statistical activities	15	6
G.	Coordination of development indicators in the context of follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits including capacity-building	16	6
H.	"Rapid response" techniques for filling data gaps and meeting other statistical needs	17	6
I.	Global integrated presentation of the work of the international organizations in statistical methodology	18	6
J.	International Comparison Programme	19	6
K.	Progress report on the revised *Handbook of Statistical Organization*	20	6
L.	Authorship and attribution for statistical publications that are jointly prepared by a number of organizations	21	6
M.	Other matters relating to the Statistical Commission and its Working Group	22	6
N.	ACC Subcommittee on Demographic Estimates and Projections	23	7
O.	Other business	24–28	7
P.	Tribute to the memory of Enzo Paci	29	7
Q.	Report of the Subcommittee on its thirty-third session	30	7

Annexes

I.	Agenda	8
II.	List of participants	9
III.	List of documents	10

I. Introduction

1. The ACC Subcommittee on Statistical Activities held its thirty-third session in Madrid from 14 to 16 September 1999. The agenda is contained in annex I below, the list of participants in annex II and the list of documents in annex III.

II. Matters for endorsement or approval of the Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions

2. The following matters are brought to the attention of the Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions (CCPOQ):

(a) The Subcommittee decided that the Chairman of the Subcommittee should present to the Statistical Commission the Subcommittee's views on issues that the Subcommittee deemed to be especially important. The Subcommittee requested the Chairman to emphasize to the Statistical Commission at its next session the Subcommittee's views on (i) coordination of development indicators in the context of follow-up to United Nations conferences and summits, including capacity-building and (ii) the global integrated presentation of the work of the international organizations in statistical methodology, and also requested the Chairman to participate in other items as necessary;

(b) The Subcommittee adopted the draft revised statistics part of the ACC Programme Classification contained in document SA/1999/8; it noted the changes that had been made in the classification and the changes that had been proposed to the classification used in the integrated presentation of statistical programmes of the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the Statistical Office of the European Communities (Eurostat), with a view to making the two classifications correspond with each other. The Subcommittee requested the Chairman of the Subcommittee to forward the proposals to the Chairman of the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) for consideration;

(c) The Subcommittee (i) took note of Economic and Social Council resolution 1999/55 regarding basic indicators for conference follow-up as well as of the activities undertaken by the United Nations Statistics Division in close cooperation with other United Nations organizations in this field (see documents SA/1999/9 and Add.1); (ii) welcomed the proposed United Nations Statistics Division programme of activities to follow up on the above-mentioned Council resolution, emphasizing the importance of statistical capacity-building and the involvement of users; and (iii) agreed to participate in the completion of the development indicators web page project with the understanding that the indicators included in the web page would be limited to those directly related to the follow-up of global conferences and summits;

(d) The Subcommittee (i) took note of the work of the United Nations Statistics Division in the development of the web site for the global integrated presentation of the work of the international organizations in statistical methodology; (ii) recognized that there were some questions of coverage that were unique to individual organizations and that the definition of what should be included would be refined in the light of experience; (iii) agreed that the United Nations Statistics Division would send a request to organizations specifying the information required to complete the database, and that organizations would, as far as possible, provide the information within 60 days; (iv) also agreed that the database would be updated on an annual basis; and (v) recommended that the United Nations Statistics Division approach the Bureau of CES with a view to rationalizing the information requirements on current methodological work between the integrated presentation of CES and that being prepared by the United Nations Statistics Division;

(e) The Subcommittee (i) noted the work of the Subcommittee on Demographic Estimates and Projections described in its report on its twentieth session (ACC/1998/16); (ii) noted comments by several members on conflicts between population estimates provided by some countries and those provided by the Population Division of the United Nations Secretariat; (iii) noted the intention of the World Health Organization (WHO) to develop its own estimates of adult mortality, raising the possibility that two sets of estimates might exist in future, and thus putting at risk the continuing availability of a single United Nations set of population estimates; (iv) expressed concern about this development; and (v) requested the involved agencies to work together with the Population Division to resolve the technical issues involved, and requested the Subcommittee on Demographic Estimates and Projections to address the coordination issues involved;

(f) The Subcommittee re-elected G. Jones of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) as Chairman of the Subcommittee with effect from the opening of the thirty-

fourth session in 2000. The Subcommittee decided that immediately following the thirty-third session, the Bureau should comprise: H. Habermann (United Nations Statistics Division, ex officio, term: permanent); F. Mehran (International Labour Organization (ILO), former Chairman, term ends 2000); A. Flatt (Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), term ends 2000); G. Jones (UNICEF, Chairman, term ends 2002); and D. Lievesley (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), term ends 2001);

(g) The Subcommittee accepted an invitation from the World Bank to host the thirty-fourth session of the Subcommittee in Washington, D.C. The Subcommittee recommended that its thirty-fourth session be held from 20 to 22 September 2000 at the headquarters of the World Bank in Washington, D.C. The provisional agenda was agreed as follows, subject to review and finalization by the Bureau:

Provisional agenda and documentation for the thirty-fourth session of the ACC Subcommittee on Statistical Activities

1. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.
2. Adoption of the report of the thirty-third session.
3. Matters arising from the thirty-third session of the Subcommittee (reports of the Bureau on its inter-sessional meetings; note by the Secretariat on follow-up to the thirty-third session).
4. Issues related to the work of the task forces (reports by the task forces).
5. Electronic commerce (report by the United Nations Statistics Division on the Conference on Measurement of Electronic Commerce: An International Statistical Institute (ISI) Cutting-Edge Conference 1999 to be held in Singapore, 6-8 December 1999).
6. Policy on dissemination of statistics in electronic form (reports by organizations on their policies including proposals on desirable policies).
7. Good practices in citation in international statistical publications (report by UNESCO).
8. Classification of statistics and statistical activities (report by the Chairman).
9. Environment statistics (report by the United Nations Statistics Division on evaluation of the national responses to its data-collection questionnaire).
10. Global integrated presentation of the work plans of the international organizations in statistical methodology (report by the United Nations Statistics Division).
11. Coordination of development indicators in the context of the follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits (report by the United Nations Statistics Division).
12. Quality assurance, arrangements with common questionnaires and conflicting statistics (reports by organizations on their practices and experiences).
13. Other matters relating to the Statistical Commission.
14. ACC Subcommittee on Demographic Estimates and Projections.
15. Bureau of the Subcommittee.
16. Dates, place and agenda of the thirty-fifth session of the Subcommittee.

III. Work of the Subcommittee on Statistical Activities

A. Adoption of the report of the Subcommittee on its thirty-second session

3. The Subcommittee adopted the report on its thirty-second session.

B. Matters arising from the thirty-second session of the Subcommittee

A more proactive role for the Subcommittee

4. For the discussion, see paragraph 2 (a) above.

5. The Subcommittee reiterated the conclusion that it had reached at its thirty-second session urging "individual organizations to speak their views on requests at the time they were made by the Statistical Commission" (see ACC/1998/14, para. 5).

C. Issues related to the work of the task forces and intersecretariat working groups

1. Task Force on National Accounts

6. The Subcommittee noted that there were no outstanding coordination issues for the attention of the Subcommittee. It also noted the presentation by the Convener on the areas where coordination was being carried out by the Task Force and the existing coordination with city groups; the Subcommittee urged the Task Force to further coordinate with other relevant city groups, especially the Delhi Group on Informal Sector Statistics.

2. Task Force on International Trade Statistics

7. The Subcommittee noted that there were no outstanding coordination issues for the attention of the Subcommittee.

3. Electronic commerce

8. The Subcommittee noted the growth in electronic commerce and the challenges this posed to national and international statistical agencies in establishing relevant concepts, definitions, standards and data-collection methods. The Subcommittee requested the United Nations Statistics Division to report to it at the thirty-fourth session on the Conference on Measurement of Electronic Commerce: An International Statistical Institute (ISI) Cutting-Edge Conference 1999, which would be held in Singapore from 6 to 8 December 1999 and was being organized by the Singapore Department of Statistics, the Centre for Management of Innovation and Technopreneurship of the National University of Singapore and the Singapore Infocomm Development Authority.

4. Policy on dissemination of statistics in electronic form

9. The Subcommittee noted the progress of all members in the dissemination of statistical data in various electronic forms (on-line, diskettes, CD-ROMs and Internet web pages) and the difficulties in establishing policies for this type of dissemination; it also noted the occasional requests by some countries to some international organizations that they pay for statistical data provided by the countries. The Subcommittee decided to include these matters in the agenda of its thirty-fourth session. The Subcommittee requested organizations to prepare notes on their policies; the notes could also include proposals that organizations might wish to make concerning what they considered to be desirable policies.

5. Task Force on Statistics of International Trade in Services

10. The Subcommittee noted that there were no outstanding coordination issues for the attention of the Subcommittee.

6. Task Force on Finance Statistics

11. The Subcommittee noted that there were no outstanding coordination issues for the attention of the Subcommittee.

7. Intersecretariat Working Group on Price Statistics

12. The Subcommittee noted the creation of the Intersecretariat Working Group on Price Statistics and its programme of work as presented in document SA/1999/5/Add.3. It agreed that there were no outstanding coordination issues for the attention of the Subcommittee.

D. Environment statistics

13. The Subcommittee:

(a) Noted that the Statistical Commission had (i) approved the Subcommittee's suggestion that the Task Force on Environment Statistics was no longer necessary, (ii) stressed the need for continued coordination in environment statistics and (iii) agreed that the Subcommittee should carry out such coordination to the extent possible;

(b) Also noted (i) the work done by the United Nations Statistics Division on the collection of environment statistics from countries and on development of the manual on environment statistics and indicators and (ii) the work of the London Group on Environmental Accounting on the revision of *Integrated Environmental and Economic Accounting*;[1]

(c) Welcomed the coordinated efforts of the several organizations that were involved in the above activities;

(d) Requested the United Nations Statistics Division to review and evaluate the country responses to the data-collection questionnaire and report on it to the Subcommittee at its thirty-fourth session.

E. Tourism satellite account

14. The Subcommittee noted the positive progress in and plans for the cooperative effort by the World Tourism Organization, Eurostat and OECD to develop a common conceptual framework for a tourism satellite account with the objective of presenting it to the Statistical Commission at its thirty-first session scheduled for 29 February-3 March 2000.

F. Classification of statistics and statistical activities

15. For the discussion, see paragraph 2 (b) above.

G. Coordination of development indicators in the context of follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits including capacity-building

16. For the discussion, see paragraph 2 (c) above. In addition, the Subcommittee agreed that: (i) organizations would send comments that they might have on the proposed database content and design of the web page (see SA/1999/9/Add.1 and especially annex 2) to the United Nations Statistics Division within 30 days, (ii) the United Nations Statistics Division would make revisions accordingly and would write to organizations to request the relevant information on their indicators and (iii) organizations would provide the information to the United Nations Statistics Division within two to three months.

H. "Rapid response" techniques for filling data gaps and meeting other statistical needs

17. The Subcommittee took note of the report of the United Nations Statistics Division on "rapid response" techniques for filling data gaps and meeting other statistical needs (SA/1999/10).

I. Global integrated presentation of the work of the international organizations in statistical methodology

18. For the discussion, see paragraph 2 (d) above.

J. International Comparison Programme

19. The Subcommittee:

(a) Noted the work done by the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the United Nations Statistics Division and OECD in response to the requests of the Statistical Commission at its thirtieth session,[2] and the intention of the World Bank to prepare a report for the thirty-first session of the Commission in collaboration with IMF and the United Nations Statistics Division;

(b) Concluded that there were no outstanding coordination issues for the attention of the Subcommittee.

K. Progress report on the revised *Handbook of Statistical Organization*[3]

20. The Subcommittee took note of the progress on and schedule for revision of the *Handbook*, including a detailed outline of its contents.

L. Authorship and attribution for statistical publications that are jointly prepared by a number of organizations

21. The Subcommittee:

(a) Supported the idea of joint authorship and production of publications when more than one organization was involved in their development;

(b) Agreed that no general guidelines needed to be established but that agreements should be reached on an individual-publication basis;

(c) Requested organizations with experience in this area to share that experience with other members of the Subcommittee;

(d) Took note of comments that citation practices were inadequate in some international statistical publications and requested UNESCO to prepare a report on good citation practices for the thirty-fourth session of the Subcommittee.

M. Other matters relating to the Statistical Commission and its Working Group

22. The Subcommittee noted that, under other items of its agenda, the necessary collaboration on preparations for the session of the Statistical Commission in 2000 had been

discussed. The Subcommittee also noted that work was being undertaken for the 2000 session of the Statistical Commission in the fields of (a) the Special Data Dissemination Standard (SDDS), the General Data Dissemination System (GDDS) of IMF and data quality, (b) industrial statistics, (c) city groups, (d) demographic, social and migration statistics (gender issues in measurement of paid and unpaid work), (e) international economic and social classifications and (f) a document and web page aimed at improving general understanding of the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics.[4] The Subcommittee noted and encouraged the necessary collaboration by Subcommittee members.

N. ACC Subcommittee on Demographic Estimates and Projections

23. For the discussion, see paragraph 2 (e) above.

O. Other business

1. Bureau of the Subcommittee

24. For the discussion, see paragraph 2 (f) above.

2. Work programme of the UNESCO Institute for Statistics

25. The Subcommittee noted the work being done by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics and the institutional arrangements that were being developed, and welcomed the way the Institute was establishing coordination with other organizations in the Subcommittee.

3. Quality and validity of national data

26. The Subcommittee noted common concerns of members about (a) quality assurance, (b) conflicting data in organizations even when the same original national data were used as a starting point and (c) conflicts between nationally supplied data and internationally comparable data prepared by some international organizations, and decided to consider these issues at the next session on the basis of reports to be prepared by organizations on their practices and experiences.

4. *Human Development Report*[5] of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP): use of data supplied by agencies

27. The Subcommittee (a) noted that several organizations were concerned about a number of aspects of the treatment of their statistics in the *Human Development Report* and the statistical content of the *Human Development Report*, (b) recalled that the Subcommittee had expressed its concern on these matters to UNDP on several previous occasions (see ACC/1990/PG/6, paras. 58-60; ACC/1991/PG/10, paras. 87-90; ACC/1992/16, paras. 43-45) and (c) regretted that problems persisted. The Subcommittee agreed that the best immediate action was for individual concerned organizations to take their concerns directly to UNDP, and requested those organizations to report back to the Subcommittee at its next session on the results.

5. Dates, place and agenda of the thirty-fourth session of the Subcommittee

28. For the discussion, see paragraph 2 (g) above.

P. Tribute to the memory of Enzo Paci

29. The Subcommittee observed a minute of silence in tribute to the memory of Enzo Paci, former Chief of Statistics, Economic Analysis and Market Research of the World Tourism Organization, a long-term dedicated member of the Subcommittee, who had passed away on 5 October 1998.

Q. Report of the Subcommittee on its thirty-third session

30. The Subcommittee adopted the report on its thirty-third session. For further discussion, see paragraph 2 (a) above.

Notes

[1] Studies in Methods, No. 61 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.XVII.12).

[2] *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1999, Supplement No. 4* (E/1999/24), para. 59.

[3] Studies in Methods, No. 28 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.79.XVII.17).

[4] See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1994, Supplement No. 9* (E/1994/29), para. 59.

[5] Annual publication published for the United Nations Development Programme by Oxford University Press, New York.

Annex I

Agenda

1. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.
2. Adoption of the report of the Subcommittee on its thirty-second session.
3. Matters arising from the thirty-second session of the Subcommittee.
4. Issues related to the work of the task forces and intersecretariat working groups.
5. Environment statistics.
6. Tourism satellite account.
7. International Comparison Programme.
8. Classification of statistics and statistical activities.
9. Coordination of development indicators in the context of follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits, including capacity-building.
10. "Rapid response" techniques for filling data gaps and meeting other statistical needs.
11. Global integrated presentation of the work of the international organizations in statistical methodology.
12. Progress report on the revised *Handbook of Statistical Organization*.
13. Authorship and attribution for statistical publications that are jointly prepared by a number of organizations.
14. Other matters relating to the Statistical Commission and its Working Group.
15. ACC Subcommittee on Demographic Estimates and Projections.
16. Other business:
    (a) Electronic commerce;
    (b) Policy on dissemination of statistics in electronic form;
    (c) Work programme of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Institute for Statistics;
    (d) Quality and validity of national data;
    (e) United Nations Development Programme *Human Development Report*: use of data supplied by organizations;
    (f) Tribute to the memory of Enzo Paci;
    (g) Bureau of the Subcommittee;
    (h) Dates, place and agenda of the thirty-fourth session of the Subcommittee.
17. Report of the Subcommittee on its thirty-third session.

Annex II

List of participants

United Nations entities and programmes

Department of Economic and Social Affairs United Nations Statistics Division	H. Habermann R. Roberts (Secretary) A. Me S. Schweinfest
Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific	A. Flatt
Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean	P. Sainz
Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia	L. Abdunnur
United Nations Children's Fund	G. Jones
United Nations Population Fund	K. Nacro

Specialized agencies and related organizations

International Labour Organization	F. Mehran
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization	D. Lievesley
World Health Organization	A. Lopez
World Bank	S. Badiee R. G. Lynch
United Nations Industrial Development Organization	T. Yamada

Other international and non-governmental organizations

Interstate Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States	M. Korolev
Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development	L. Kincannon
Statistical Office of the European Communities	J. Whitworth
World Tourism Organization	A. Massieu
World Trade Organization	R. Jackson

Annex III

List of documents

Document No.	*Agenda item*	*Title or description*
SA/1999/1	1	Provisional agenda
SA/1999/1/Add.1	1	Proposed schedule of discussion
SA/1999/1/Add.2	1	Proposed additions to the provisional agenda
SA/1999/2	3	Report of the Bureau meeting, New York, 18 June 1998
SA/1999/3	3	Report of the Bureau meeting, New York, 5 March 1999
SA/1999/4	3	Matters arising from the thirty-second session of the Subcommittee (New York, 16-18 June 1998)
SA/1999/5	4	Statistical Commission observations on the work of the task forces and intersecretariat working groups
SA/1999/5/Add.1	4	Report of the Task Force on Statistics of International Trade in Services: coordination issues
SA/1999/5/Add.2	4	Report of the Task Force on International Trade Statistics: coordination issues
SA/1999/5/Add.3	4	Report of the Intersecretariat Working Group on Price Statistics: coordination issues
SA/1999/5/Add.4	4	Report of the Task Force on National Accounts: coordination issues
SA/1999/6	6	Tourism satellite account
SA/1999/7		Not issued
SA/1999/8	8	Statistics part of the ACC Programme Classification
SA/1999/9	9	Note on Economic and Social Council resolution 1999/55 on development indicators (coordination of indicators in the context of the follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits, including capacity-building)
SA/1999/9/Add.1	9	Status of the web site on development indicators
SA/1999/10	10	Rapid response techniques for filling data gaps and meeting other statistical needs
SA/1999/11	11	Global integrated presentation of the work of the international organizations in statistical methodology
SA/1999/12		Not issued
SA/1999/13	14	Preparations for the 2000 session of the Statistical Commission and follow-up to the 1999 session of the Commission
ACC/1998/14	2, 3	Report of the ACC Subcommittee on Statistical Activities on its thirty-second session (New York, 16-18 June 1998)
ACC/1998/16	15	Report of the ACC Subcommittee on Demographic Estimates and Projections on its twentieth session (New York, 23-25 June 1998)
E/1999/11	9	A critical review of the development of indicators in the context of conference follow-up

Document No.	*Agenda item*	*Title or description*
E/1999/77	9	Informal meetings of the Economic and Social Council on basic indicators for the integrated and coordinated implementation and follow-up of the major United Nations conferences and summits (New York, 10-11 May 1999): summary by the President of the Council
Unnumbered	4	Report of the eighth meeting of the inter-agency Task Force on Statistics of International Trade in Services, Frankfurt, 11-13 November 1998
Unnumbered	4	Report of the Task Force on International Trade Statistics, Washington, D.C., 8-10 March 1999
Unnumbered	4	Terms of reference of the Intersecretariat Working Group on Price Statistics
Unnumbered	4	Minutes of the second meeting of the Intersecretariat Working Group on Price Statistics, Geneva, February 1999
Unnumbered	4	Meeting of the inter-agency Task Force on Finance Statistics: summary of discussion, Washington, D.C., 13 and 14 July 1998
Unnumbered	4	Second meeting of the inter-agency Task Force on Finance Statistics: summary of discussion, Paris, 29 and 30 October 1998
Unnumbered	4	Meeting of the inter-agency Task Force on Finance Statistics: summary of discussion, Basle, 17 and 18 June 1999
Unnumbered	4	Minutes of the Intersecretariat Working Group on National Accounts (ISWGNA) technical-level meeting, Washington, D.C., 15 and 16 April 1999
Unnumbered	9	Copies of Powerpoint presentation on the development indicator web site: first phase
Unnumbered	12	Proposed outline of the revision of the United Nations *Handbook on Statistical Organization*